

Grunderwald, Thursday 1/2 past five, 27<sup>th</sup> June

I take the first leisure now to resume my account. I find that I must have walked about 34 miles yesterday, making due allowance for the windings of the path. I commenced at 5 o'clock, reached Engelberg at nine, where I rested till half past eleven, and reached Meyringen as I said before at half past seven. The journey from Stanz is through a narrow but fertile valley enclosed by high and picturesque mountains for about seven miles, when the valley contracts, the mountains on each side rise to a great height into sharp and bare peaks, leaving hardly room for the Aa to descend between. It forms, I may say one continual Cataract from Engelberg to this point. Before this pass is reached I had gone by some other mountains which were very remarkable; among them the Brisenstock, a ridge of rock like the upturned edge of a hatchet, some six thousand feet high, and throwing up from one extremity a column of rock like a vast obelisk. The road which is carried at considerable elevation along one side of this narrow valley, is not difficult, and exhibits the whole way the most sublime scenery. The Wallenstock rises on one side to the height of above 8000 feet; and those on the other side are not less lofty. Presently the Titlis, shining summit of the Föllis rises before you, surrounded by others scarcely less elevated. The Titlis is the highest of the Unterwalden Alps (10710 feet). - You then arrive at a place where the Aa forms a series of Cataracts in the bottom of the gorge, nearly a thousand feet below you; the opposite mountain exhibits an almost perpendicular wall of rock almost six thousand feet, and a little cataract formed by the melting snow above falls from the top to the bottom. Soon I entered the little valley of Engelberg, the most beautiful and picturesque I have seen, probably the finest in Switzerland; at least that of Meyringen and this of Grunderwald where I am now writing are not to be compared with it. I only wonder it is so little known and visited. I think it not improbable that I am the first American who has visited it. It is far out of the ordinary routes, and though easily accessible with charrs from Stanz, yet the three passes that lead out of it are excessively difficult foot-paths. It is a green sunshiny valley, having perhaps 80 acres of plain, but very rich pastures rise up the mountain-sides to some distance; it is entirely shut in by the high mountains that rise on every side: the Titlis rising abruptly on the South within a few yards of the ~~houses~~ village, and sending down its avalanches in spring close to the houses. But the glaciers are so situated as to send their summer avalanches in the other direction, so that the hamlet is not in danger, - the other mountains toward the South have glaciers on their summits, but the peaks on the other sides are ~~now~~ present ~~marked~~ precipices. The Engelberg, from which the hamlet is named (Angel-Mountain) is a lofty mountain shaped like a slender cone, with the apex cut off obliquely, rises almost with the valley and presents a very curious appearance. The large Couvent stands just between the base of this Mountain and that of the Titlis. Attached to it is a very large and fine church for such an out-of-the-world place. I stopped at the simple Auberge of the

# 31 } 11

Engel (Angel): Mine Host could speak or understand German and Italian, so that our communication took place mostly by signs and single words. I giving him the German names, as far as I could, of what I wished. I got a very comfortable lunch of cold roast meat, - But I wanted some strawberries, and could not think of the German name, and had considerable difficulty. At length he seemed doubtfully to comprehend what I wanted; he went out, and returned in a few minutes with a fine dish of the article in question, "Excellent cream is as common as need be; so I had one fine feast. -

I found that I was the first visitor here this season. I amused myself with looking over the Travellas-book (which you always find) and reading the remarks of former visitors. An Englishman the summer before had ascended the highest peak of the Tittlis. I afterwards saw that this could readily be done, as my route led me close to the ~~top main ridge~~ top of the main body of the mountain.

To get into the valley of the Aar it was necessary to cross the Jock, a mountain connected with the Tittlis and almost as high. The pass between the two mountains is almost 7000 feet at the summit, is covered with snow and is in immediate proximity with the glaciers of the Tittlis. The ascent is exceedingly difficult; indeed from all I can learn it is much more difficult than any of the passes at all frequented by Travellas. I took a guide to the summit and some distance beyond, as a stranger could never have found the way. My guide was an old man of 60 years. From a high ridge near the summit, which belonged rather to the Tittlis I had a magnificent view of the mountains to the north and the valley I had passed through, and on the other side close to us, a vast glacier; the streams emerging from it formed a small river (which we had some difficulty in crossing) and emptied into a dark alpine lake just below. Here I gathered a few alpine plants, as souvenirs of the place. And then weary climb over the snow brought us to the top of the Jock, and here where shelter was impossible we were exposed to a shower, but our umbrellas protected us in part, and ~~it was~~ the view repaid for a little wetting.

Descending a little my guide showed me a lake, <sup>almost</sup> surrounded with snow, fed from the glaciers; the outlet the source of one branch of the Aar was the stream which flowed down the valley I was to descend to Meyringen; the knapsack was again transferred to my shoulders and I was left to myself. As I entered the valley of Enggatten the scenery grew wondrously fine and as I was I enjoyed the whole journey extremely, tho' it took me four hours and a half of continual descent, yet I look back upon it with delight. The main stream formed a succession of beautiful cascades, - the mountains on each side very high, and mostly perpendicular faces of rock, and down these a great multitude of cascades of all sizes fell, some others springing 500 feet at a leap; others falling from a much greater height over the rocks, looked like long skeins of yarn, if you will pardon the simile, dangling in the air. It must be much like the valley of Lauterbrunnen, according to the description; but I think the latter cannot excel it. - I hope to know to-morrow. A shower drove me into a miserable chalet, the highest one inhabited at this season, where I young man who dwelt there for the summer, with his herd of goats, and his brother, a young lad of

fifteen who had come up from Meyringen to bring him some food &c. - and was just about to return. I drank about a quart of milk, took from the goats and found it excellent. When it stopped raining the youngsters and myself started together; I transferred my knapsack to his shoulders, and a franc and a half to his pocket to the great satisfaction of both parties. He proved a very useful little fellow, though I could not understand much of what he said; he showed me ~~the greatest routes~~ some waterfalls and curious things that I should otherwise have missed. With the true spirit of his nation, ever ready to improve an opportunity, he told me he had a brother who spoke French, who would be my guide for the next day. It rained most of the way, but I was compensated for the partial wetting by the views, the most beautiful waterfalls, which fell into the valley in great profusion from the high precipices on each side. I could sometimes see twenty at one view. After a long and weary descent we came at last near the bottom, where this valley, and two others almost at the same point fell into the main valley of the Aar, and I could look at the same moment up four deep and wild mountain valleys. Then skirting along the side of the mountain, we soon descended to Meyringen, deep in the main valley of the Aar, with the fine cascades behind it, and another very fine one (the Cascade of the Reichenbach) on the opposite side of the valley. Glad enough was I when we reached the door of the humble Auberge, and great was the havoc I made with the eatables which the kind landlady provided in abundance and of excellent quality. I sat down on a sofa in my chamber to read a little, but fell asleep instantly, slept until eleven, then took my bed and slept until half past seven in the morning.

I can say, with Rancho Parra, "Blest be the man who first invented sleep." In the evening what with my great fatigue and blasted feet, I suppose I should be scarcely able to move the next day, and that travelling on foot would be impossible. But I woke perfectly restored, my limbs supple, and my feet much better than I had anticipated; my guide made his appearance while I was at breakfast, said that it would take three days to make the excursion over the Great Scheideck to Grindelwald, then over the lesser to the Nenggen Alp, to Lauxterbrunnen and back to Meyringen by Entalachen and the Lake of Brienz. I insisted that it should be done in two, with the aid of a Chas from Brienz, at the end of the second day. Leaving my knapsack here, and taking a few things in our pockets, we set out at half past nine; stopped on our way to see the falls of the Reichenbach, where the stream of the valley we were climbing makes the descent of 2000 feet in a succession of leaps; the lower found the celebrated falls, - very fine. - Farther above numerous waterfalls are seen dangling from the perpendicular sides of the narrow valley; one remarkably high and slender is called the Seilbach (Rope-fall). Asclended through beautiful green mountain pastures, dotted with chalets, the peak of the Wetterhorn in full view directly before us, a sharp pyramid, one side dark rock, the other pure white snow. The body of the mountain was still hidden by the Nellenhorn, the first of the

chain of high Bernese Alps we were approaching, (9500 feet), then the Engelhörner (Angel-peaks), and high up between these, we had a fine distant view of the most beautiful glacier in Switzerland, the Rosenlani, celebrated above all others for the purity of its untroubled white surface, and the clear azure of its depths and caverns. Stopped at a little inn, which is occupied only during the summer; got an excellent little dinner at half past eleven, - charges moderate, visited another waterfall, and then walked half an hour out of our way, to the foot of the Rosenlani glacier, which descends to only 4200 feet above the level of the sea; found a party there, two gentlemen and a lady, the latter carried in a chair; - admired the fine white surface, entered a little way into one of the crevices, looked down into the deep azure chasms, - returning viewed the awful gorge through which the stream from the glacier makes its way, at least 500 feet deep, and only 4 or 5 feet wide, the water rushing and boiling and roaring in the bottom like mad. Threw down a big stone and heard it crashing against the sides, and shattered to atoms. - Continued up the Scheideck, close along the broad and vast perpendicular side of the Wetterhorn, - finally reached the summit of the pass (6040 feet) and enjoyed the magnificent view of the mountains and down the valley of the Grindelwald. The Wetterhorn (peak of tempests) rises on vast precipice of alpine limestone, its base extending from Grindelwald on the one side and almost to Rosenlani on the other, and so near us that it seemed easy for a strong man to throw a stone against it, though it is really more than a mile off; its summit is 11450 feet above the sea; this precipice consequently forms a wall about six thousand feet in height. Next to this is the Mettenberg (perhaps 10700 feet; and next the great Eiger (Giant, 12230 feet) presenting its long thin edge, like the edge of a hatchet turned up into the air; while back of the Mettenberg appears the pointed cone of the Schreckhorn (the peak of terror, 12560 feet). The vast space between these peaks is filled by an immense glacier, here and there interrupted, which under various names extends from Rosenlani and Grindelwald almost to the Grimsel, and to Gried in the Valais. The increasing supply of ice and the refrigeration of such an immense quantity forces branches down the valleys far below the level of perpetual snow, particularly these at Grindelwald, the lowest known; the base of the lowermost being little more than 3000 feet above the sea-level; I descended rapidly, looked down upon the two glaciers just mentioned, reached the little hamlet of Grindelwald in the bottom of the valley, close at the feet of these vast mountains, and a little above the foot of the lower glacier, which is so close that it is almost possible to throw a stone at it; but I believe it is a mile off. - reached here at 5 o'clock, (21 miles) having walked very deliberately. It is now just at sunset; the day has been warm, but now it is very cold, and I am shivering too much to hold my pen; besides it is time for supper; and I want another view of the mountains. Adieu.